

Let me begin first by warning everyone of you in this room that what I have to say will offend some of you. I do not feel that what I have to say is unfounded or without merit and I will prove this by way of examples. I do feel however that the reason that I have been asked to speak before all of you this morning is out of a genuine concern on the part of Vice President Yuen to improve the University as a whole. The only way that this process can begin is for all of us to understand where it is that we live, who it is that we are educating, who is doing the educating and most importantly, what is the goal of this education.

All I ask is that we be allowed to speak, and if you have comments or questions, please wait until I am finished, and if I am really offensive to some of you, just get up and leave.

It is important for all of you to understand that as a Hawaiian woman I have no respect for you and this educational institution because of the lack of cultural awareness. This lack of respect stems from the fact that every day that I attend this university I am violated.

I am violated because I am a woman who attends a university in which 83% of the tenured faculty are white men.

I am violated because I am a woman of color who attends a university that has a tenured faculty in which only 26% are people of color.

I am violated because I am a Hawaiian who attends a university in which only 1.5% of the faculty are Hawaiian.

With statistics such as these, I am getting the message that only haole people at the University of Hawai'i have the right to teach, speak and write in an academic environment.

I am violated when I sit in my history classes and I am told that my ancestors had no civilization.

I am violated when I sit in my Pacific Island Studies classes and I am told that topics on Hawai'i are to be avoided. At the same time I look at the school of tourist industry management and I realize that it is my culture that is being prostituted and exploited for over millions of tourists yearly and this is being encouraged by the University itself.

*Kahale Ruklow - aka spoke*

It is hard to have respect for an educational institution and the people who run this institution when I am made to feel inferior, my culture is belittled and I am humiliated.

In order for this situation to be changed, we must all begin to educate ourselves about where we are and who we are; who we are educating; how it is that this education is being conducted; who is it that is doing the educating; and most importantly, what is the goal of this education.

Right now I feel like the victim on parade. We, the victims, two women of Hawaiian ancestry, are before a room full of Deans, the majority of whom are haoles, to speak to the issue of the lack of cultural understanding on this campus. Furthermore, we are being asked to offer suggestions about how to correct this situation. Yet, all of you sitting here are the PhDs, all of you sitting here are the administrators, thus, after you hear what it is that we have to say, it will then be the responsibility of all of you to change this situation. We expect to hear from you.

The environment at University of Hawai'i lacks cultural sensitivity. Everyday students of Hawaiian ancestry who attend this university are violated academically.

To be more precise, we are told by the so-called "experts" in cultural anthropology that Hawaiians "make up" their culture. Even though these "experts" were not born or raised in these islands, nor do they speak the Hawaiian language.

We are told by the so-called "experts" in the history department that the Hawaiian people did not have a civilization.

We are told by the "experts" in archaeology that my kupuna, my ancestors murdered their babies. When asked for proof, we, the accused, are supposed to be satisfied with the answer that, "well, everybody knows Hawaiians committed infanticide."

We are told by the so-called experts in the science department that the sacred lei niho plaua of my ali'i was made from female pubic hair. The sexual perversion of a statement such as this does not stop here. Why, look at what is going on in this very room. Here it is, two young Hawaiian women, who are both students, are asked to come and speak about how it is that people of color are violated on this campus to a room that is filled with white men.

We are faced with the fact that if a woman of color on this campus sharply criticizes a white male student in a public forum, mind you this is not in a classroom situation, she will be investigated, she will be threatened with her removal from the directorship of an important educational center. She will have her name publicized without mercy in every newspaper in town. But, when we are asked to come and speak before all of you this morning, we are told not to mention names. Now, why the double standard? And, in the meantime, students of Hawaiian ancestry and the Hawaiian community at large are getting the message: if a brownie gets uppiddy, if a brownie dares criticize a white man in this plantation town, she will be harassed, she will be threatened, and she will be silenced. Hawaiians on the university campus got the message. We are just to accept the fact that we do not have the right to speak, that we do not have the intelligence to analyze, and above all, none of us had better rock the boat.

In contrast a professor of haole ancestry in a class is at liberty to say that Hawaiians make up their culture. Haole professors can say, as an instructor from the geography department said, "Hawaiians are wasting their time learning Hawaiian because it is a dead language. They would be better off learning Japanese or learning to speak better English. In other words, we would be better off learning and assimilating the ways of the colonizers.

In contrast, a haole instructor in the general science department can say with the utmost of sexual perversion that the sacred lei niho palaua of the Hawaiian ali'i was made from female pubic hair, and when questioned by his students of Hawaiian ancestry for his source, he said he can't quite remember and that he thought it was related to some sort of fertility thing. Is this what academics are all about? These are YOUR people doing this to the students of Hawaiian ancestry everyday in the classroom. They do not even give us the privilege of a public forum. The violations take place behind closed doors.

What I have just done for all of you is give you a description of how students of Hawaiian ancestry are violated everyday by your faculty, and just how hard it is to have respect for people such as yourselves and those who teach at this university. However, the violations do not involve just those of us who are sitting in the classroom. The violation is made complete when attacks are made against my ancestors.



When they say that my ancestors are baby killers, my ancestors were sexual pervers, my ancestors were without civilization. These accusations serve to foster shame, inferiority and worthlessness among all of the Hawaiian people.

If this university IS committed to academic excellence, as it claims, and if this university is dedicated to the principles of justice and equality for all, these sorts of violations against the native people of Hawai'i must STOP AND EDUCATION MUST BEGIN.

I am offering the following suggestions:

- Students should be encouraged to question their instructors; they should be made to feel comfortable about inquiring about the sources from which faculty get their information.
- Professors, such as those I mentioned from the general science and geography departments should be suspended for a semester for making such racist statements and for posing opinion as fact.
- The university must begin to hire more people of color as faculty and staff in order to have the faculty truly represent the island community. „hen this begins, then our education will begin to reflct where it is we live and how it is that we relate to each other here and then how we relate to the rest of the world.
- Just as the faculty needs color, the core curriculum needs to diversify. I would suggest, for starters, that Hawaiian Studies 107, entitled “Hawai'i and the Pacific” be added to the core curriculum. In this way students whether they were born in these islands, or not, can be introduced to Hawai'i, the Hawaiian people, culture and language, in addition to being given a survey of the larger Pacific and the people who occupy its islands.
- Administrators, deans, faculty and staff should watch videos, attend presentations, and read articles that are written and produced by Native Hawaiians about contemporary Native Hawaiian issues. I suggest: “Faces of the Nation” and “:Pain in Paradise” for starters.

That isa all that I have to say right now. I hope you take me seriously and consider seriously ways of making this university environment more culturally aware.

We will be waiting to hear from you and we will be looking forward to seeing evidence of changes in the university's environment as it relates to people of color.

